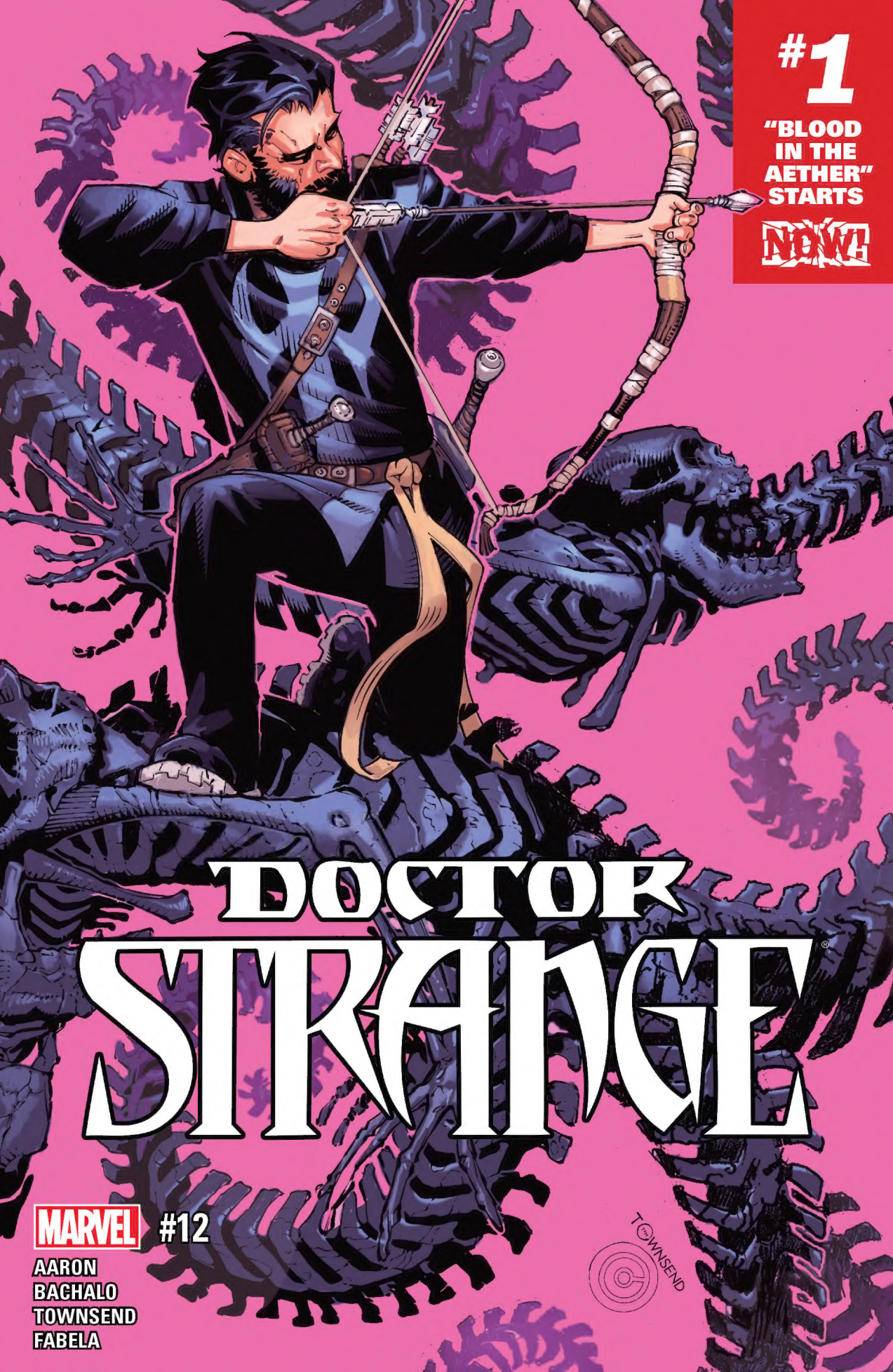
#1
"BLOOD IN THE AETHER" STARTS
NOW!
DOCTOR STRANGE
MARVEL
#12
AARON
BACHALO
TOWNSEND
FABELA
TOWNSEND

STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the ANCIENT ONE who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

DOCTOR STRANGE

The EMPIRIKUL, an interdimensional army, destroyed almost all magic on Earth. Stephen and Earth's mages managed to defeat them, but the state of magic will never be the same again.

With his access to magic severely depleted and with only a limited number of mystical weapons, the Master of the Mystic Arts is at his weakest. And things are about to go from bad to worse, because his old adversary, Baron Mordo, is back in town...

BLOOD IN THE AETHER
CHAPTER ONE

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I NEVER IMAGINED HOW MUCH I WOULD MISS IT.
THE SUFFERING, I MEAN.
I TRULY DID TRY TO LIVE WITHOUT IT.
IT'S BEEN ALMOST THREE ENTIRE DAYS SINCE I HURT ANYONE.
BUT MISERY IS ALL I'VE EVER KNOWN. IT WAS MY CRADLE. MY MOTHER'S MILK. WITHOUT IT...
...I WITHER AND STARVE.
YOU HUMANS... YOU DO TERRIBLE THINGS TO ONE ANOTHER WHEN YOU'RE STARVING, DON'T YOU?
SO DEEP DOWN, YOU UNDERSTAND. I KNOW YOU DO.
STILL, I WANT YOU TO KNOW, I TAKE NO JOY FROM THIS.
PLEASURE, YES. AN IMMENSE AMOUNT OF PLEASURE. BUT NO JOY.

NYU MEDICAL CENTER.

I HOPE YOU ALL CAN *FORGIVE* ME FOR WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO.

AND DO AND DO AND DO.

MAYBE SOMEDAY I'LL EVEN BE ABLE TO FORGIVE MYSELF.

THOUGH I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THE ONE WHO--

THWICK

LET THEM GO.

THESE PEOPLE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO YOU.

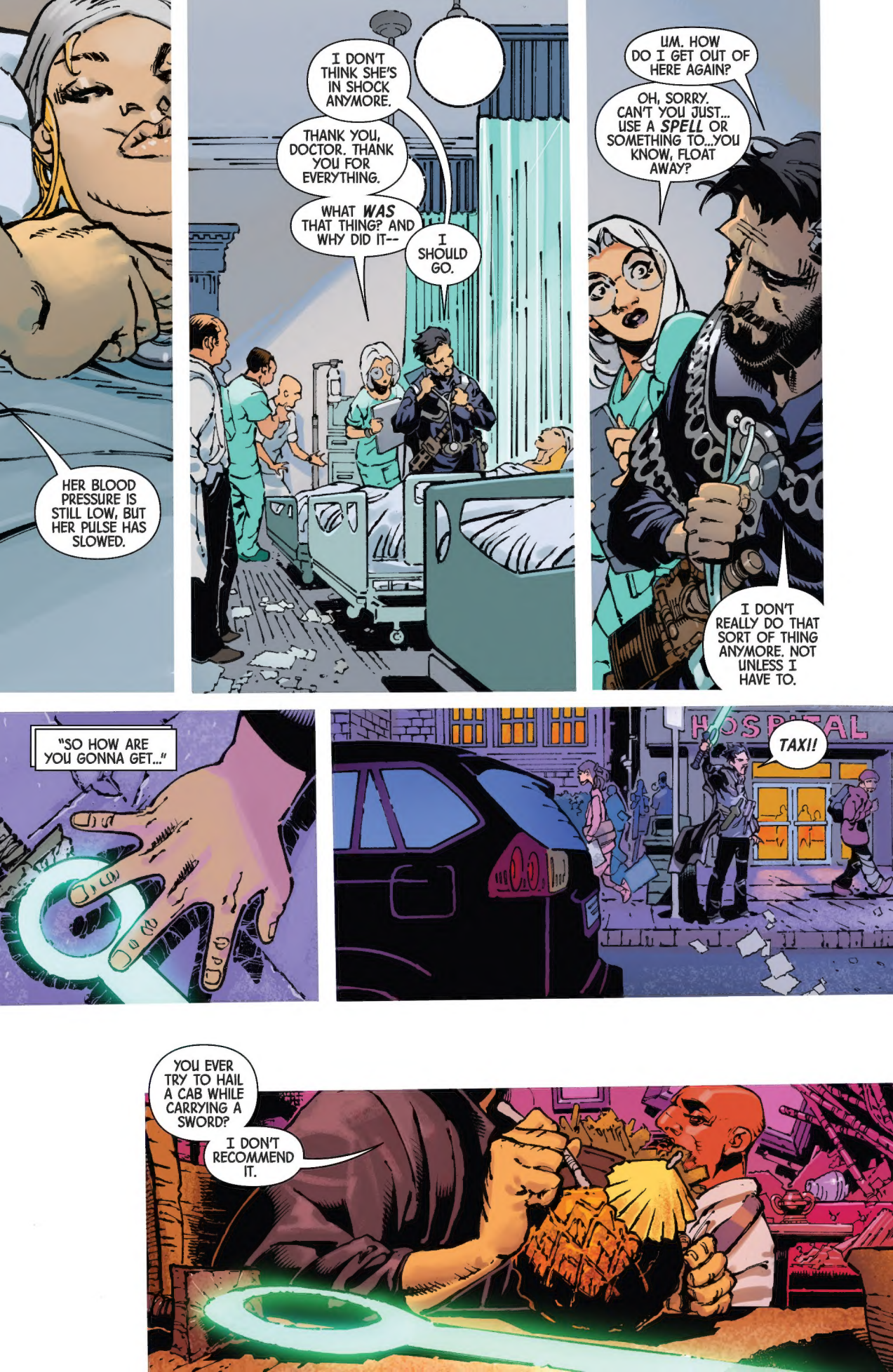
I'M THE ONE YOU WANT TO SEE SUFFER.

HELLO, DOCTOR. WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU.
STOP THIS. THESE PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED ENOUGH.
THEIR SUFFERING LED ME HERE. WHAT LED YOU, I WONDER?
YOU. YOU'RE A PART OF ME. EVEN NOW.
YOU MEAN YOU GREW ME FROM BLACK MAGIC IN YOUR CELLAR. NURSED ME ON YOUR PAIN.
I MEAN YOU'RE MY RESPONSIBILITY.
I WAS A SPONGE TO SOAK UP YOUR SUFFERING. WHAT AM I NOW, DO YOU THINK?
I CAN HELP YOU. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP YOU. NOT THEM. LET THEM GO.
YOU WANT TO HELP ME? OKAY.
TAKE YOUR SWORD AND SLICE OFF YOUR FOOT.
I'LL LET YOU CHOOSE WHICH ONE.
POP
NO.
I DON'T THINK SO.
THEN YOU'RE NOT HERE TO FEED ME, ARE YOU? I THINK YOU'VE COME TO SMOTHER YOUR BABY IN ITS CRIB.
YOU'RE NOT A HELPLESS CHILD. IF YOU WANT ME TO SUFFER, YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT YOURSELF.
OKAY.

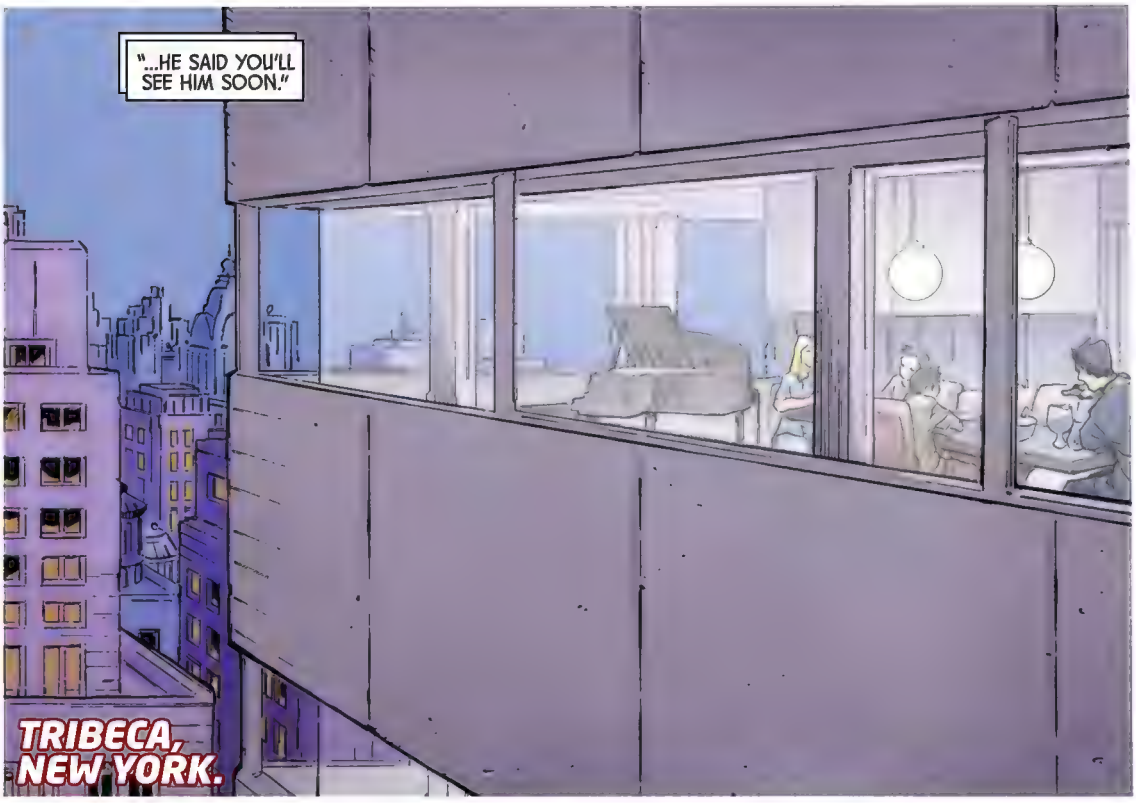
GAGGH!
I'M NOT A PART OF YOU ANYMORE, DOCTOR. I AM MY OWN CREATURE NOW. YOU HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED ME MY NAME.
WHAT... IS YOUR...
IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, I'D PREFER YOU SCREAM IT.

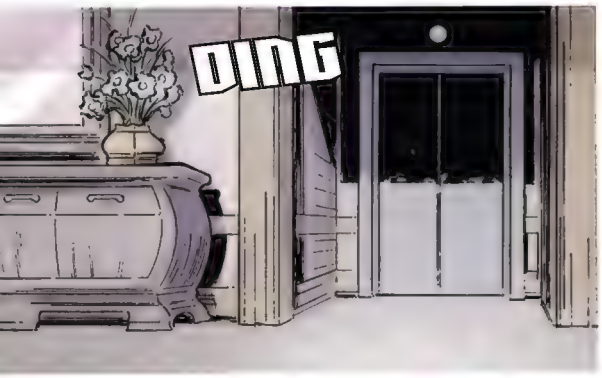
IT'S BEEN A...TOUGH MONTH. AFRAID I'M ALL OUT OF SCREAMS.
HERE, TRY THIS INSTEAD.
GUM OF THE WINTERFAWN TREE OF AUCKLAND. FRESHENS EVEN MY BREATH. AND ONCE IT'S CHEWED TO THE RIGHT CONSISTENCY...
...FREEZES EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES.
KRKK
WHPP!
SO SAD. SO MANY TOYS YOU HAVE TO CARRY WITH YOU NOW.
WORDS AND A WAVE OF YOUR FINGERS USED TO BE ALL YOU EVER NEEDED.
OH AND ALSO ME.
LIFE WITHOUT ME IN YOUR CELLAR JUST ISN'T THE SAME. IT HURTS, DOESN'T IT, DOCTOR? IT HURTS TO BE SORCERER SUPREME. I CERTAINLY HOPE IT DOES.
YOU HAVE TO STOP THIS! I CAN MAKE THINGS RIGHT! I CAN GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT!
OH, DOCTOR, OPEN YOUR EYES. YOU SAID IF I WANTED YOU TO SUFFER, I'D HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF.
BUT I ALREADY HAVE.

NO. NO, DON'T GO. YOU CAN'T...
MISERY.
IF YOU'RE DOCTOR STRANGE...
...THEN I'M MISTER MISERY.
AND EVERY TIME I MAKE SOMEONE SUFFER, I WANT YOU TO KNOW...
...IT'S YOUR FAULT.
MONDAY.
MISTER MISERY.


HER BLOOD PRESSURE IS STILL LOW, BUT HER PULSE HAS SLOWED.
I DON'T THINK SHE'S IN SHOCK ANYMORE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.
WHAT WAS THAT THING? AND WHY DID IT--
I SHOULD GO.
UM. HOW DO I GET OUT OF HERE AGAIN?
OH, SORRY. CAN'T YOU JUST... USE A SPELL OR SOMETHING TO...YOU KNOW, FLOAT AWAY?
I DON'T REALLY DO THAT SORT OF THING ANYMORE. NOT UNLESS I HAVE TO.
"SO HOW ARE YOU GONNA GET..."
HOSPITAL
TAXI!
YOU EVER TRY TO HAIL A CAB WHILE CARRYING A SWORD?
I DON'T RECOMMEND IT.

THE BAR WITH NO DOORS.
YOU BETTER GET YOURSELF A CAR, DOC. SOME SORT OF STRANGE-MOBILE.
YOU'RE A FLOATING HEAD IN A JAR, CHONDU, SO I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO TRY AND PARK IN THIS CITY.
NO STRANGE-MOBILE. I WONDER IF SUPER HEROES CAN GET DISCOUNTED SUBWAY RATES?
YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED OR ARE YOU ALREADY FEELING BAD ENOUGH AS IT IS?
YOU'RE SURE IT WAS REALLY HIM?
I'M SURE. BARON MORDO, IN THE FLESH. HE SAT RIGHT WHERE YOU'RE SITTING. ORDERED A WHISKEY SOUR.
I TOLD HIM TO GET THE HELL OUT AND WENT FOR THE SHOTGUN.
HE HIT ME SO HARD, HE CRACKED MY JAR. AND HE NEVER EVEN MOVED A MUSCLE.
HE STILL HAS MAGIC?
JUST AS MUCH AS EVER, I'D SAY.
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? THANKS TO THE EMPIRIKUL, I CAN BARELY TIE MY SHOELACES WITH MAGIC.
YOU CAN ASK HIM YOURSELF SOON ENOUGH, DOC. MORDO CAME HERE TO DELIVER A MESSAGE...


"...HE SAID YOU'LL SEE HIM SOON."
TRIBECA, NEW YORK.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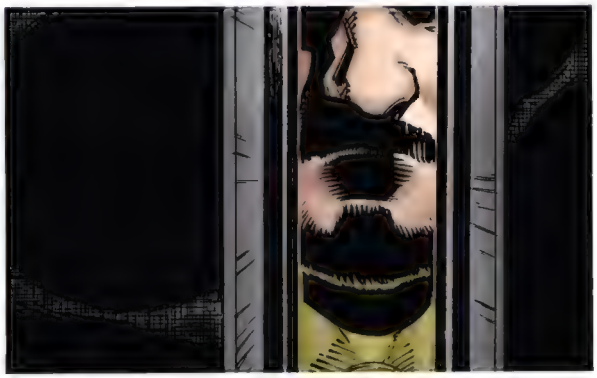


EXCUSE ME, THIS IS A PRIVATE RESIDENCE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
BEAUTIFUL VIEW. I'LL TAKE IT.
I BEG YOUR PARDON. THIS ISN'T...

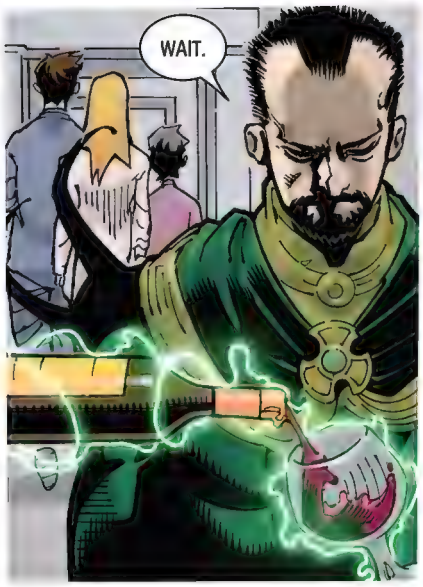
GET OUT.

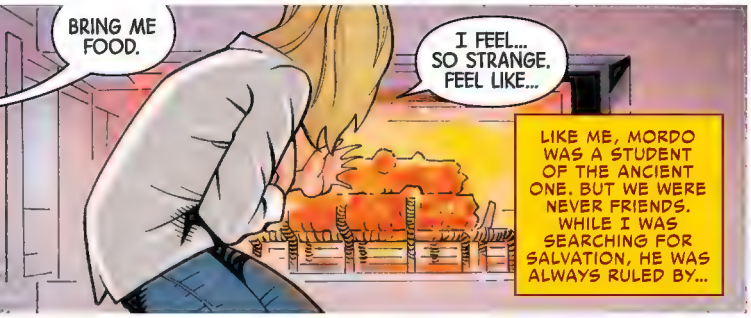
WHEN I LOOK AT *KARL MORDO*, I THINK...

THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF *THE ANCIENT ONE* GO I.

MORDO IS A MAN CONSUMED WITH GREED AND ENVY. A MAN TRAPPED UNDER THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF HIS OWN MOUNTAINOUS EGO.

A MAN SLOWLY BEING EATEN ALIVE BY LONELINESS.

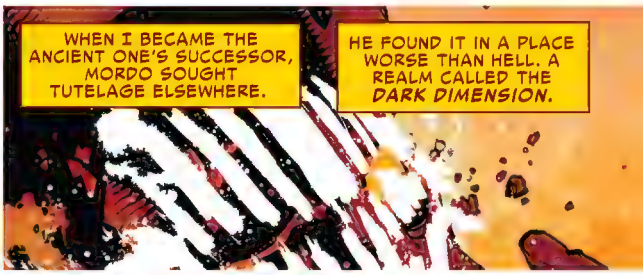



BRING ME FOOD.
I FEEL... SO STRANGE. FEEL LIKE...
LIKE ME, MORDO WAS A STUDENT OF THE ANCIENT ONE. BUT WE WERE NEVER FRIENDS. WHILE I WAS SEARCHING FOR SALVATION, HE WAS ALWAYS RULED BY...

AAARGGH!!!
...DARKER DESIRES.

AAAARRGGH!!! ARRRRRRGHH!

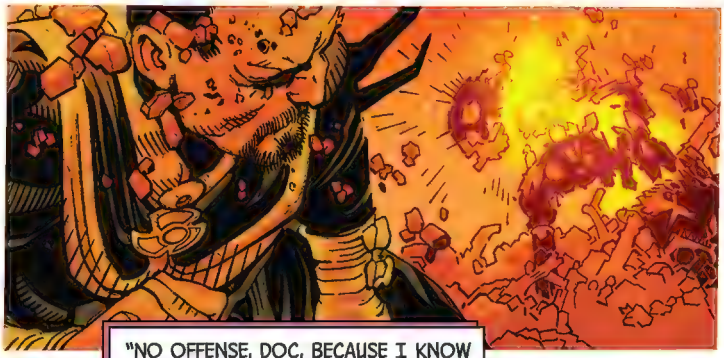
AH!
AHA.
AHAA HA HAAA.


WHEN I BECAME THE ANCIENT ONE'S SUCCESSOR, MORDO SOUGHT TUTELAGE ELSEWHERE.
HE FOUND IT IN A PLACE WORSE THAN HELL. A REALM CALLED THE DARK DIMENSION.

THE REALM OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU.
WHAT IN ALL THE HELLS DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING, LITTLE MAN?

NOTHING NOW. THANKS TO YOU.
REMIND ME, MORDO. DID I SEND YOU TO EARTH TO CHASE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH OR TO DO A JOB?
ALL IS READY. IT'LL BE DONE. DON'T WORRY YOUR FLAMING HEAD ABOUT--

HGGHK!



"NO OFFENSE, DOC, BECAUSE I KNOW HE'S YOUR ARCHENEMY AND ALL, BUT ACCORDING TO THE INTERNET, THIS BARON MORDO GUY...

"...IS KIND OF A LOSER."

THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM.
EVERY DEATH ROW IN THE COUNTRY IS FILLED WITH LOSERS, ZELMA.
PEOPLE WHO'VE LOST ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS PEOPLE OF ALL. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.
I WAS ONE.
YEAH, BUT I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT A PRETTY GREAT BATTING AVERAGE AGAINST THIS GUY. YOU'VE BEATEN MORDO EVERY TIME YOU'VE EVER FOUGHT HIM, RIGHT?
I HAD THE STRONGER SORCERY ALL THOSE TIMES. AND EVEN THEN, I COULDN'T SAVE EVERYONE.
MORDO IS A MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC WHOSE CRIMES INCLUDE MYSTICAL TERRORISM, THIEVERY OF SOULS, BODILY POSSESSION AND ALL MANNER OF MURDER, OF BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL VARIETY.
BARON MORDO IS A DANGEROUS MAN, AND I HAVE TO FIND HIM.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT THE MAGIC TO SPARE FOR THIS, DOC? I'VE SEEN HOW LONG IT TAKES YOU TO RECOVER AFTER YOU--
THAT DOESN'T MATTER RIGHT NOW.
ALL THAT MATTERS IS FINDING MORDO.
I'LL SCOUR THIS CITY DAY AND NIGHT, ANY WHICH WAY I CAN, UNTIL I FIND WHERE THAT BASTARD IS HIDING AND--
KNOCK KNOCK

DOOR MUST BE ON THE FRITZ AGAIN. IT'S SUPPOSED TO DISCOURAGE ANYONE FROM KNOCKING UNLESS THEY...
HELLO, WONG.
IS THE DOCTOR IN?
TUESDAY. BARON MORDO.
UUGGH
HE'S HERE.
SANCTUM. ACTIVATE DEFENSIVE ENCHANTMENTS.
THE DOC ISN'T UP TO THIS. AFTER EVERYTHING HE'S BEEN THROUGH--
WONG, ARE YOU--
I'M FINE.
THEN STAY INSIDE.
WHAT DO WE DO, WONG?
I WISH I KNEW, ZELMA. BUT THIS...IS A WHOLE NEW WORLD, EVEN FOR ME...

"...AND A NEW DOCTOR STRANGE."
KARL...
...I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR YOU.
YOU'VE FOUND ME. THIS ISN'T A BAD TIME, I HOPE?
THEY'RE ALL BAD TIMES AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED. MIND TELLING ME WHERE YOU'VE BEEN?
FREAKING HIPSTERS ARE DRESSING LIKE DRUIDS NOW. I HATE THE VILLAGE.
TAKING SHELTER, WHILE THE STORM PASSED.
FINE WORK YOU DID, BATTLING THE EMPIRIKUL. THE MASTER AND I WERE MOST IMPRESSED.
DORMAMMU. YOU'RE SERVING THAT MONSTER DORMAMMU AGAIN.
HOW IS HE POWERING YOU, KARL? HOW ARE YOU--
I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH CATCHING UP ON OLD TIMES.
LET'S GET ON WITH IT, SHALL WE?
I'M SO ANXIOUS TO SEE THE ALL-NEW DOCTOR STRANGE IN ACTION!

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD MAKE SOME WITTY RETORT ABOUT "AN APPLE A DAY KEEPING THE #%&* AWAY."
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, KARL?
KRNCH
I DON'T HAVE THE DAMN TIME.
THAP

OH, MY. MAGIC APPLES?
THIS IS EVEN WORSE THAN I EXPECTED.

I HAD PLANNED ON TOYING WITH YOU FOR A BIT, PROLONGING THE SUFFERING AND SUCH. BUT THIS...THIS IS JUST TOO PATHETIC.
I FEEL ALMOST LIKE I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR.
YOU'RE WELCOME, STEPHEN!
CLOAK! PROTECTION MODE!

FOOM

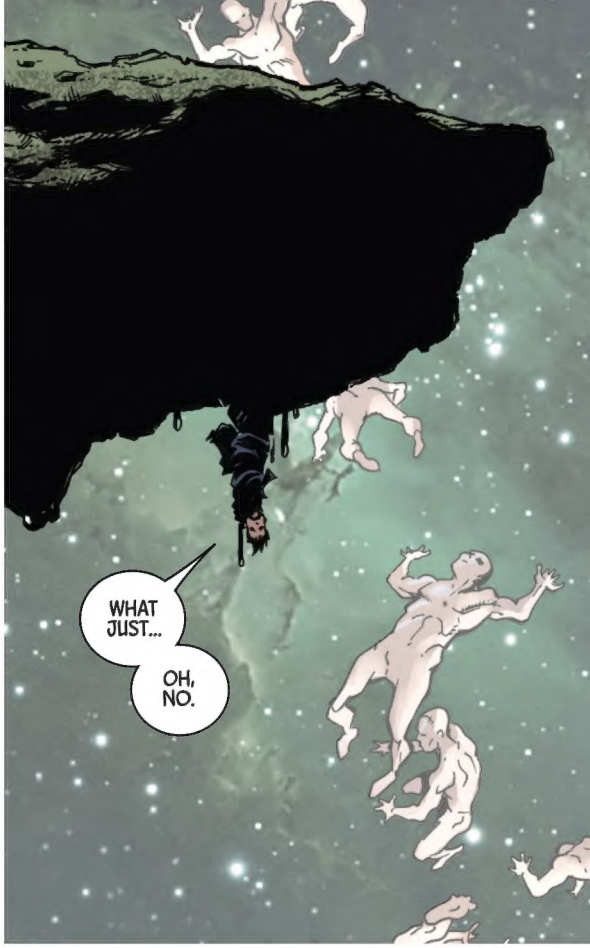
GOOD WORK, NOW JUST...

...JUST LET ME OUT.
ANY TIME NOW.
WHERE IN ALL THE HELLS DID YOU GET THAT CAPE?
GAH, GET OFF ME, YOU...C'MON, CLOAK!
FORGET I ASKED. JUST DIE.

WHAT... HOW ARE YOU--?

NO.
NO NO NO...

NO! HE'S MINE! YOU CAN'T TAKE THIS FROM ME! DON'T YOU...


WHAT JUST...
OH, NO.

HELLO, DOCTOR. IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT?

IT WOULD SEEM WE HAVE A BIT OF CATCHING UP TO DO.
TELL ME...

...HAD ANY GOOD DREAMS LATELY?
TUESDAY, PART TWO. NIGHTMARE.
TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT ISSUE: ROGUES GALORE!

Tour
THE SEVEN SEAS
With
BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
Call 555-FISH